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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3727
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 002941

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/20/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KISL](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: MAJALI SPREADS THE WEALTH IN PARLIAMENTARY
LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS, INCLUDES OPPOSITION IN MINOR ROLES

REF: A. AMMAN 2757

[B](#). AMMAN 2171

[C](#). AMMAN 2781

Classified By: Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) Summary: Jordan's parliament spent the first week of its ordinary session electing its leadership. Abdulhadi Al-Majali comfortably won re-election to the speakership, and his National Democratic Trend parceled out leadership jobs and committee chairmanships with the National Fraternal Bloc. The loose opposition of leftists and independents was excluded from committee chairmanships and leadership positions altogether. In a surprise move, the Islamic Action Front was also granted a leadership position and a role on the Public Freedom Committee. Contacts suggested that inclusion of the IAF was done in support of a broader government strategy to bring Islamists back into the fold. End Summary.

Building a Coalition

[2](#). (SBU) As Jordan's 15th parliament concluded organizing itself for its second session, which began October 5, Abdulhadi Majali was re-elected speaker with 79 of 110 votes after behind-the-scenes maneuvering in the runup to the session (Ref A). Majali loyalist Abdullah Al-Jazy was elected first deputy speaker with 62 votes. Throughout September, the NDT courted the second largest bloc in parliament, the National Fraternal Bloc (also known as "Al-Ikha'" - Ref B). In return for the bloc's support of Majali, it received two leadership positions: second deputy speaker (Tayseer Shdeifat, 66 votes) and first assistant speaker (Nasser Al-Qaisi, 58 votes). In addition, it was allotted the chairmanship of the Legal Committee and the Education Committee. The opposition is now reduced to the leftists and old guard independent deputies (Ref B). This hodgepodge formerly held several committee chairmanships, along with the deputy speaker job. Yet in the new order, they are completely shut out of the leadership ranks and hold no committee chairmanships.

Islamists Included On The Margins

[3](#). (C) Perhaps the most significant development in the parliamentary leadership elections was the surprise selection of Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Islamic Action Front (IAF) member Abdulhamid Dneibat as second assistant speaker. An IAF member was also given the deputy role in the Public Freedom Committee, which will give the bloc a more prominent voice on issues such as civil liberties that it frequently uses to criticize the government.

[4](#). (C) Post has heard several interpretations of why the IAF won a leadership position, despite the fact that Majali and his associates did not actively court the IAF and that the

party did not vote for Majali as speaker. Reports in the Islamist press triumphantly suggested that the IAF lured independent deputies and members of the Ikha' into their corner. Qaisi confirmed that some members of the Ikha' cast their ballots for Dneibat, but only because the NDT candidate for the job was weak and the group wanted to balance Majali's influence. High level NDT contacts told us that they were instructed to vote for the Islamists as a deliberate political strategy of inclusion. Several NDT contacts, in conversations with poloffs on October 19, went further in claiming a direct link between party support for the IAF and recent government talks with domestic Islamists and Hamas (Ref C). They suggested (without providing details) that inclusion of the IAF in the leadership was part of a broader government strategy to bring Islamists back into the fold.

Beecroft